

Emergency Support Function 15 External Affairs

PRIMARY AGENCY: Washington State Military Department
Emergency Management Division

SUPPORT AGENCIES: Washington State Office of the Attorney General
Washington State Department of Agriculture
Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges
Washington State Department of Community, Trade and
Economic Development
Washington State Department of Corrections
Washington State Department of Ecology
Washington State Department of Employment Security
Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
Washington State Department of General Administration
Washington State Department of Health
Washington State Governor's Office of Indian Affairs
Washington State Department of Information Services
Washington State Office of the Insurance Commissioner
Washington State Department of Labor and Industries
Washington State Department of Licensing
Washington State Liquor Control Board
Washington State Military Department – National Guard
Washington State Department of Natural Resources
Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission
Washington State Patrol
Washington State Department of Retirement Services
Washington State Office of the Secretary of State
Washington State Department of Social and Health Services
Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction
Washington State Department of Transportation
Washington State Utilities and Transportation Commission
Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs
American Red Cross
Federal Emergency Management Agency

I. INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE

This establishes procedures and protocols for Emergency Support Function 15 (ESF 15), or External Affairs, which supports state incident management during emergencies and declared disasters through a Joint Information System (JIS) or Joint Information Center (JIC). Washington State's intent for ESF 15 is exactly the same as ESF 15 at the federal level: To unite all internal and external communications within External Affairs in order to provide consistent and coordinated information. At the federal level, ESF 15 integrates the following functional areas: the Joint Information Center; State, Territorial, Local & Tribal

Affairs; Community Relations; Congressional Affairs; International Affairs; Private Sector; and Planning and Products. Washington State's ESF 15, however, integrates the Joint Information Center, Business Coordination, Legislative Affairs, Tribal Affairs, International Affairs and Community Relations. The Planning and Products function is included as the Research Team.

B. SCOPE

Washington State emergency public information actions before, during, and after any emergency will be determined by the severity of the emergency as indicated by the local, tribal or state agencies, that are involved, or as perceived by the public. A significant emergency public information response will involve many city, county, and state agencies. Emergency Support Function 15 describes those agencies and their responsibilities.

II. POLICIES

A. Authorities

See CEMP Basic Plan.

B. Assignment of Responsibilities

Emergency Support Function 15 provides mission assignments to those departments and jurisdictions in accordance with emergency support functions outlined by the State CEMP Basic Plan.

III. SITUATION

A. Emergency/Disaster Conditions and Hazards

A natural or man-made emergency or disaster may occur at any time.

B. Assumptions

1. An event has occurred, or public perception is such that people believe they have been placed in danger by a natural or technologically-caused emergency or disaster.
2. The event requires responding agencies to provide information and instructions to the public about the incident and actions people should take to save and protect lives, property, economy, and the environment. Responding agencies also would provide information to reduce public concerns about the incident and response activities.

IV. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

A. General

1. Local jurisdictions are responsible for providing their citizens with information on the incident and what immediate protective actions they should take, such as taking shelter or evacuating.
2. When the Washington Emergency Operations Center is activated, the organization and scope of Emergency Support Function 15 operations will be established in accordance with the needs and requirements of the response. See State Emergency Operations Plan Emergency Support Function 15 organization chart. In addition, the organization of ESF 15 will reflect NIMS principles for Emergency Public Information, especially the principle that the Public Information Officer supports Incident Command and “represents and advises the Incident Commander on all public information matters relating to the management of the incident.”

B. Organization

1. Local Jurisdiction Information Support Structure

In accordance with the NIMS and ICS, the local jurisdiction should designate a public information function to provide information and instructions to its citizens before, during, and after an emergency or disaster. This function, or person assigned to the public information role, should coordinate its emergency public information actions with the state.

2. State Information Support Structure

The Washington State Military Department, Emergency Management Division (EMD) Public Information Officer (PIO) will coordinate the management of the state's emergency public information response through all phases of natural or technological events. This will be accomplished at the direction of and in collaboration with the Governor's Communications Office. See State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) chart for the Emergency Support Function 15 organization in the EOC.

C. Procedures

1. State emergency public information is organized according the principles of NIMS and ICS. State emergency public information will be coordinated through the Emergency Support Function 15 External Affairs organization in the State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and via the Joint Information System. If a Joint Information Center (JIC) is established, state-level emergency public information will be provided to the media and the public through that facility. The state's ESF 15 will collaborate with and support locating and managing the operation of such a center.
2. State agencies with specific Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) or other response roles will be notified to provide staff support for the state's emergency public information efforts. This support will be provided when requested by the Governor's Communications Office or the Emergency Support Function 15 External Affairs Manager in the State Emergency Operations Center.
3. The state will coordinate via the Joint Information System with federal agencies to provide federal-level information to the public following a natural or man-made disaster or emergency, as necessary. The state's ESF 15 will collaborate with and support locating and managing the operations of a Joint Information Center or Joint Field Office.

D. Mitigation, Preparedness, Response and Recovery Activities

All Pertinent Agencies:

1. Identify and train appropriate staff to implement the public information responsibilities outlined in this plan, including required National Incident Management System (NIMS) training courses.
2. Prepare and coordinate public information resource materials to be used for an emergency or disaster.
3. Participate in training and exercise programs to test emergency public information and joint information system-joint information center (JIS-JIC) programs and procedures.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Primary Agency

Washington State Military Department, Emergency Management Division

1. Establishes Emergency Support Function (ESF) 15 operations for External Affairs in the State Emergency Operations Center to provide instructions and information to the public about a natural or man-made emergency or disaster. ESF 15 activities and functions will be carried out

at the direction of and in collaboration with the Governor's Communications Office.

2. Coordinates the planning, production, dissemination and evaluation of the state's emergency public information through all phases of an emergency or disaster.
3. Coordinates the dissemination of information and instructions to the general public and special needs populations; the media; local, tribal and state government officials; members of the business community; members of the State Legislature and U.S. Congress; international agencies and governments.
4. Provides information on the emergency or disaster, its impact on the state, state response actions, and agency support being provided to local jurisdictions and state response agencies.
5. Provides information on recovery programs designed to return affected communities as nearly as possible, to their pre-incident condition.

B. Support Agencies

1. State Agencies

As listed in the CEMP Basic Plan, the following Washington State agencies are committed to providing general public information officer support, as requested, to the Office of the Governor, the state EMD, the state EOC, or the lead state agency during response and recovery activities, should an emergency, disaster, or hazard-specific incident occur:

Office of the Attorney General
Department of Agriculture
Board of Community and Technical Colleges
Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development
Department of Corrections
Department of Ecology
Department of Employment Security
Department of Fish and Wildlife
Department of General Administration
Department of Health
Governor's Office of Indian Affairs
Department of Information Services--????
Office of the Insurance Commissioner
Department of Labor and Industries
Department of Licensing
Liquor Control Board
Military Department - National Guard

Department of Natural Resources
Parks and Recreation Commission
Washington State Patrol
Department of Retirement Services
Office of the Secretary of State
Department of Social and Health Services
Superintendent of Public Instruction
Department of Transportation
Utilities and Transportation Commission
Department of Veterans' Affairs

2. American Red Cross

Provides information on location of shelters or assistance centers, and assistance being provided to people affected by an emergency or disaster, via the National Shelter System database.

3. Federal Emergency Management Agency

- a. Coordinates federal-level emergency public information through the Department of Homeland Security following a natural or man-made emergency or disaster.
- b. Collaborates with and support locating and managing the operations of a JIC, if requested.

VI. RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

Resource requirements are identified in supporting plans and procedures.

VII. REFERENCES

State Emergency Operations Plan staffing chart for the Emergency Operations Center.
National Response Framework, January 2008
FEMA 301 - *National Incident Management System* April, 2008